SUMMARY STATEMENTS
from the
STUDY OF HOME DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZATION IN THE RURAL TOWNS OF SIX MASSACHUSETTS COUNTIES

Records were obtained from 153 leaders and 624 other homemakers in 38 rural towns of the six counties. The 624 other homemakers were divided as follows: 238 lived in towns with a high degree of organization; 274 lived in towns with less organization; and 112 lived in towns with no home demonstration organization.

Part I

Some Facts About the People in the Rural Towns of the Six Counties

1. About 52% of the women in the 38 Massachusetts towns studied had made some effort to get Extension information at some time.

2. About 38% of them had attended Extension meetings at some time or other.

3. Some 14% of them did not attend meetings but made other effort to get Extension information.

4. There were 23% of those who attended meetings who had attended sometime during the war.

5. The women who participated in Extension included all age groups. about 3/5 of them were 45 years of age or over. About 1/5 were under 35 years of age.

6. Leaders are a little younger than their groups. Less than 1/2 of them were 45 years of age or over.

7. A larger percentage of young women (less than 35 years of age) made other effort to get Extension information than did women of other age groups.

8. The women who participated in Extension included all educational levels but somewhat greater numbers of them had a higher formal schooling level than the general population of these towns. As schooling level increased a higher proportion of women in that group attended meetings.

9. Of the women who had only an 8th-grade education or less, 65 percent made no effort to get Extension information. Of the women who had done some graduate work, only 14% made no effort to get Extension information.

10. Leaders were often better educated than their groups in that they had gone to higher levels of formal schooling.

11. The women who participated in Extension were more often those having home conveniences (running water, electricity, and telephones) and a slightly more favorable economic level than that of the general population. Leaders had a more favorable level of living according to these measures than did the other homemakers.

12. The majority of the women participating in Extension did not live on farms but lived in open country as often as in close settlements.

Part II

A. Has the Home Demonstration Organization Developed in Rural Women Willingness to Accept Leadership Responsibilities?

1. In the case of advisory council members, 70 percent of the leaders had served 5 years or longer. In the case of town committee members, 40 percent had served 5 years or longer. There were 68 percent of the teaching leaders who had served only two years or less.

2. The degree of organization in the town seems to have made some significant difference in the continued service of leaders. Almost 42 percent of the leaders in towns with a high degree of organization had served as long as five years. Only 13 percent of the leaders in towns with less organization had served as long as five years.

3. The functions performed by leaders can be divided roughly into 3 types of jobs: (a) <u>chore jobs</u> - on the average 67-75 percent of the leaders performed this type job; (b) <u>teaching jobs</u> that require subject-matter skills - on the average 61-67 percent of the leaders performed this type job; (c) <u>administrative jobs</u> calling for group leadership ability - on the average 31-40 percent of the leaders performed this type of job.

4. The degree of organization in the town seems to have made some significant difference in the extent to which leaders performed these functions. In every case above, the first figure refers to the average for the leaders in towns of less organization; the second figure refers to the average for the leaders in towns with a high degree of organization.

B. Has the Home Demonstration Organization Been Successful in Getting Homemakers to Recognize the Organization's Leaders and Their Jobs?

1. <u>Did homemakers know the agents?</u> Only 35 percent or less did know the home demonstration agent. Home demonstration organization seems to play no significant part in making homemakers familiar with the names of Extension agents. A greater percentage of women in towns where there was no home demonstration organization knew the names of the agents than in towns where there was home demonstration organization.

2. <u>Did Homemakers know the lay leaders?</u> The Home Demonstration Organization did seem to play a significant part in making homemakers aware of the names of their own local leaders; however, less than half of the homemakers did know the names of lay leaders.

3. Did homemakers know the jobs of lay leaders? The various leadership jobs are understood by few leaders and fewer homemakers. Never more than one-third of the homemakers knew the functions of any of the leaders. The functions performed by teaching leaders are best understood by homemakers. The functions of the advisory council members were least understood by homemakers. In towns with less organization, women less frequently knew the functions of leaders than did women in towns with a high degree of organization.

C. Has the Organization Been Successful in Making Homemakers Acquainted With Its Procedures?

1. Do homemakers know how the local program is determined? The majority of the homemakers, regardless of degree of organization, had no opinion concerning how the home demonstration program is determined. The majority of the leaders, regardless of degree of organization, were positive that there was no plan in their communities to get the women together to talk over the needs of local homemakers as a means of program planning.

   When asked to describe the program-planning procedure in their towns, relatively few homemakers could give details.

   The degree of organization seems to have a bearing on the extent to which leaders exercised the program-planning function.

2. Do homemakers know how leaders are selected? Approximately 20-25 percent of the leaders and 85-90 percent of the homemakers said that they did not know how leaders are selected. Somewhat more often, homemakers in towns with less organization said they did not know, as compared with homemakers in towns with a high degree of organization.

D. Has Home Demonstration Work Brought About Widespread Understanding of Its Purpose?

1. About one-fifth of the homemakers could put into words what Home Demonstration Work meant to them.
2. Almost all of the leaders could frame an adequate statement of the purpose of the work.
3. Leaders and homemakers were much more sure that home demonstration was concerned with homemaking problems, such as sewing, canning, etc. than with community problems or international policies.

E. Has Home Demonstration Work Fulfilled Its Purpose of Widespread Adoption of Practices?

1. About 50% of the homemakers had been reached with canning information. About 25% of them followed the canning recommendations.
2. About 25% of the homemakers had been reached with clothing information. About 22% of them had followed the clothing recommendations.
3. Just 15% of the homemakers had been reached with house furnishings information. Only about 8% had followed recommendations.
4. The degree of organization seems to have had some relation to the extent of adoption of practices.